TECHNICAL NOTES

LAKE STATES FOREST EXPERIMENT STATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · · FOREST SERVICE

No. 448

Forest Ownership Stabilizing in Lake States

Greater stability of ownership is one of the favorable characteristics appearing from a comparison of recent Lake States forestry statistics with those of earlier years. The rapid buildup of public forests, largely through tax-forfeiture and distress sales, came to an end in the early 1940's (fig.1). Recent changes have been mainly in the nature of consolidations and have resulted in a slight shrinkage of combined public holdings since 1945.

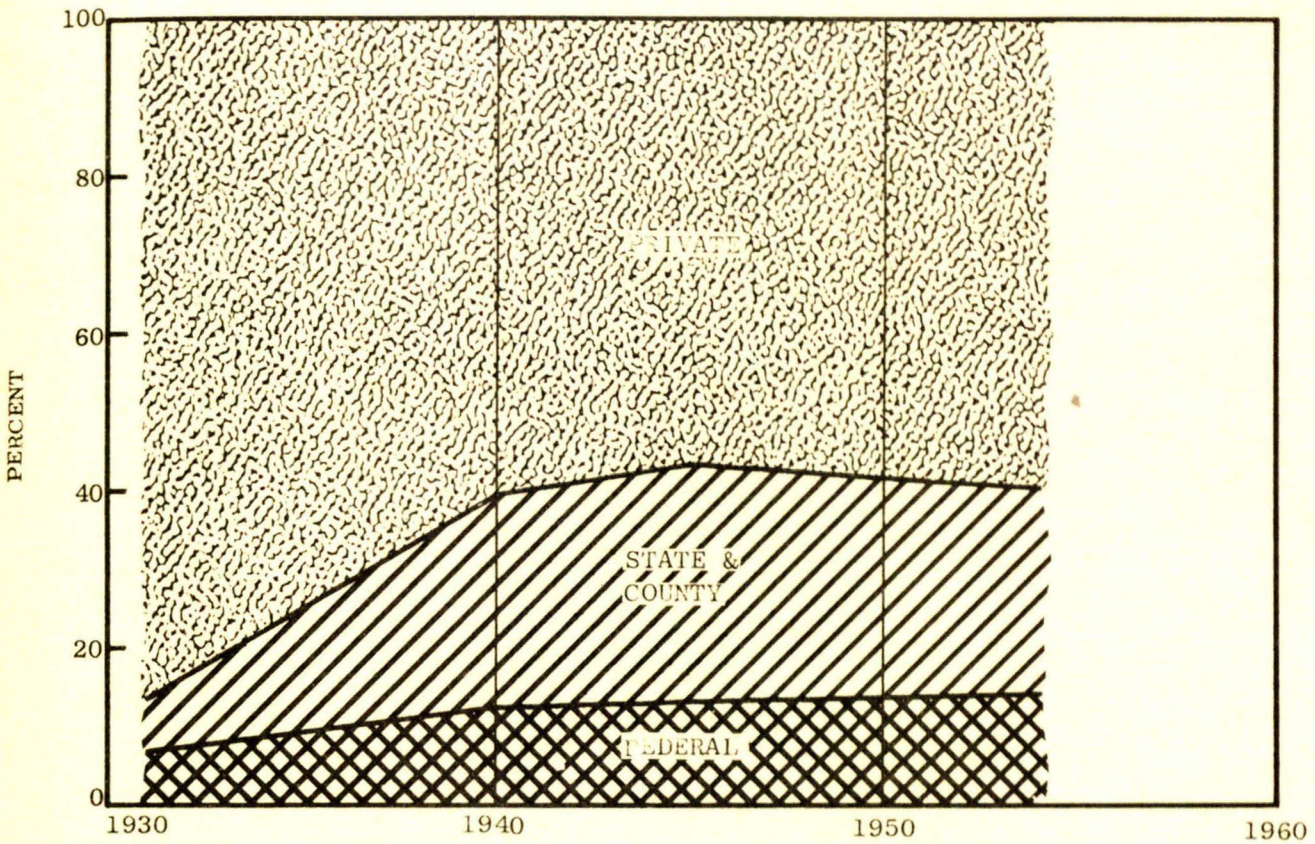

Figure 1.--Trend in public and private forest land ownership in the Lake States, 1931-1953.

(Over)

January 1956 R. N. CUNNINGHAM, Forest Economist

MAINTAINED AT ST. PAUL 1, MINNESOTA, IN COOPERATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Federal holdings, reported as 2.9 million acres in 1931, rose rapidly during the 1930's, and subsequently advanced at a moderate pace to 7.5 million acres in 1953 (table 1)[1/]. Timber volume, estimated no doubt very conservatively at 2.3 billion board feet in 1931, is now rated 8.2 billion feet.

Table 1.--Ownership of forest land[1/]

(Thousand acres)

Owner	1931	1940	1945	1953[2/]
Private:				
Other than farm	34,742	18,639	15,698	16,649
Farm	13,851	15,155	15,784	15,184
State	3,467	8,779	9,218	7,747
County	400	6,076	7,648	6,152
Federal:				
National forest	1,800	5,413	5,892	5,895
Other	1,140	1,572	1,460	1,645
All owners	55,400	55,634	55,700	53,272

1/ Data sources are as follows:

1931 - A National Plan for American Forestry, p. 131, Senate Doc. No. 12, 73d Congress, 1933 (data have been revised to exclude N. Dak.).

1940 - Unpublished data compiled from initial survey in the thirties.

1945 - A Reappraisal of the Forest Situation, Report 1. U. S. Forest Service, 1946. (Processed.)

1953 - Timber Resource Review (preliminary draft), Chap. IX A. U. S. Forest Service, 1955. (Processed.)

2/ Commercial area only.

State and county forests increased from 3.9 million acres carrying 0.9 billion board feet of timber in 1931, to 13.9 million acres with 7.0 billion feet of timber in 1953[1/].

Farm forests have remained fairly stable in area. They have increased considerably in timber content.

Other private holdings shrank rather drastically in area up to 1945 but have stabilized since. They have less merchantable sawtimber volume than 15 years ago but have gained in stability through the carving out of some 3.0 million acres of industrial forests attached to lumber, pulp, and other wood-using industries.

1/ Data for 1953 exclude noncommercial forest land.